

JUNE 1958

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The Reformed Journal

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DOES OUR THEOLOGY HAMPER OUR MISSIONS?

by Leonard Verduin

IT IS AN OPEN SECRET that the Christian Reformed Church is embarrassed by its record in evangelism. The Church's official paper says editorially that "something's wrong" in regard to home missions and that "it's time for a change." The editor of *The Banner* writes about a "malady" in the Church. The plain fact is that we are not selling well in the world of our times. In the area of missionary outreach the Christian Reformed Church is a very sick man.

Various doctors have been at the bedside of this patient. But they do not agree with each other, neither as to the exact nature of the illness nor in regard to the indicated medication. One says that the entrance requirements are too stiff and that they should be lowered; admit first and indoctrinate later is the recommendation. But this leads another doctor to shake his head sadly, both as to the diagnosis and as to the prescription. He is even afraid that the patient will get worse and may die if this advice is followed. Still another doctor proposes a shot of the adrenalin of "inwardness" — whatever that mystery drug may be.

Meanwhile the patient does not improve. At least not significantly. It is true, the latest *Yearbook* shows a slightly better pulse, one person per congregation per year over and above the low rate of gain that constitutes the patient's distemper. This is too small a betterment to warrant the issuing of any bulletins announcing a change for the better.

It might be wise to let still another doctor take a look at the sick man. Here is one who has stood for nigh unto two decades at a point where the Christian Reformed Church touches the world, the very area where the disease comes to expression. His opinion as to the nature of the ailment in question may sound radical if not bizarre; but that could mean that he deserves a hearing.

Anyway, out with it. Can it be that the final reason for the petty gains made by the Christian Reformed Church is *theological*? Is it possible that our evangelistic effort is bedeviled by something *theological*?

The present doctor thinks so. He believes that the theological position that sometimes comes to expression among us is to a large extent the cause of the halting gait of the feet that should be beau-

tiful upon the mountains. And it is the purpose of this article to set this forth.

When the present doctor was still an undergraduate, one of his classmates remarked in class one day that "it seems that in order to be a good missionary one has to be a bit Arminian." The professor in charge took this "aside" sufficiently seriously to spend the whole hour on it. Needless to say, he did not endorse the statement made by the naughty student; but he did make it quite plain that one can so make a caricature of the doctrine of predestination that it becomes an impediment to missions. For the present doctor that was a useful class — even though we didn't get ahead a single page in Berkhof.

This article is not a plea for the relinquishment of the doctrine of election in order that missions may flourish. It does not propose a single step in the direction of an Arminian theology. If it has anything theological to contribute it is this, to point out that the doctrine of the decrees is properly stated if and when, and only if and when, it is stated in the context of other equally pivotal items of theology. Without the complementary truths, confessed with equal fervor, any given item of the Reformed system becomes itself distorted. The very Canons of Dordt would be unacceptable to the present writer if they did not contain the complementary truths, such as the assertion that "as many as are called by the gospel are unfeignedly called." We can learn a lot from the swallows; it is said that no swallow ever flies alone, there is always at least a second one on the wing. So it is with the various constitutive elements of Christian truth; not a single creedal item may usurp the air. For ourselves we prefer to seat the several items of Christian truth at a *round* table, so that not one of them will assume an air of superiority above the rest.

LET US SPEAK PLAINLY. A distorted doctrine of divine sovereignty can stifle the missionary spirit and program.

Such distortion occurs when we say that election and reprobation are equally ultimate. To say that God is as much pleased, or, that He is pleased in the same way, with the spectacle of a reprobate on the way to perdition as He is with the sight of one

of the elect on the way to glory — this is to bind the feet of missions.

To say that God loves the elect and that He hates the reprobate and to let it go at that is to put hobbles on the missionary spirit. For then we must conclude that we cannot love a man until he gives evidence of election. And with that, attitudes and policies spring up that will doom our missionary activity to perpetual barrenness.

To say that God loves the elect and that He hates the reprobate and to let it go at that is to make it impossible for us to manifest a prevenient love for men. Where this caricature of the Reformed faith is regnant, there men get the impression that we are prepared to love them if, and when, and to the extent, that they give evidence of a state of grace; they find us unable to love men anteriorly, prior to the beginning of their movement towards Christ. The theology we are rebuking makes it illogical for us to love sinners while they are yet sinners. And that makes for a fearful handicap in our outreach.

It is precisely the experience of being loved *as a sinner in his sin* that softens the heart of the sinner. To hold that we must love men in so far as they have differentiated themselves as believers, and that we do well to withhold our love from those who have not as yet begun to differentiate themselves thus, is to forge a most effective tool for the obstruction of missions. The doctrine of election so pulled out of shape will put us out of touch with men *in their sin* most effectively. Any ship caught in the current of this bad theology will find itself in the doldrums presently, doldrums from which there is no escape. For no sinner has ever been helped by the offer of love *on condition*; the sinner needs to hear from us, and experience from us, a love that comes forth in spite of the unloveliness of the object. A love that is contingent on a "provided" is impotent and barren.

It is wrong for us to be selective in our love for men; we must love in all directions. This the Master teaches us very plainly. In Matthew 5:43ff He takes men to task for loving and hating according to the differentiation that has taken place, for loving "neighbors" and hating "enemies"; and He prescribes a love that is indiscriminate, one that is not blunted by human meanness, not even when that meanness comes to expression in the persecution of the faithful.

And this indiscriminate love, when practiced, is but the creatural reflection of a similarly indiscriminate love on the part of God, the God who sends sunshine and rain upon saint and sinner alike. If we are to be children of God, that is, if we are to emulate God, then we will love indiscriminately and anteriorly. That is *the* point in this item of Christ's teachings.

Granted that this promiscuous benignity on the

part of God is on the common grace level — for it deals in the commodities of common grace. But this only shows that the doctrine of selective grace must be supplemented by the doctrine of non-selective grace. Without the latter the former is heresy.

Common grace is called common precisely because it is common, that is, non-selective, indiscriminate, promiscuous.

And common grace is prevenient grace, that is, a grace that antedates any movement toward the Christ. When men experience particular or redemptive grace they experience a *second* grace at the hand of God. And when they accept the Christ, and so begin to qualify for that love that passes between "the brethren," at that moment they should be experiencing a *second* love at our hand.

It is right here that the shoe pinches. A theology that leads men to say with unabated breath that there is a grace that is particular and then to add, under their breath as it were, that there is a grace of God that is promiscuous — such a theology blights the root on which any missionary activity can flourish. Whether the doctrine of a non-selective grace is openly denied or subtly suppressed makes but little difference in practice; both times it throttles the missionary program by rendering impossible the exercise of any prevenient love for sinners.

A SYMPTOM that is very prominent in the patient's affliction is a prayer policy that results from a virtual denial of common grace. A prayer policy comes to expression — by no means rarely — in our circles of embracing in our prayers those areas in which we think to see special grace in operation, and of conveniently omitting the rest. The writer of these lines well remembers the occasion when for the first time he heard the petition: "Heavenly Father, bless all that Thy hand has made!" This sounded quite heretical to him, accustomed as he was to prayers following as closely as is possible the lines drawn by special grace. But when he thought thereon it dawned on him that if indeed God is concerned to bless in an indiscriminate fashion, then it is all right for us to ask Him to continue to do so. Whatever success the present writer has had with "outsiders" dates from the day that prayer was uttered in his presence. He has ever since kept his ear to the ground to see whether the universalism which a truly biblical view of the total grace of God requires comes to expression in our prayers. Although his opportunity for sampling the prayers that ascend is in the nature of things much restricted, his impression is that "Bless all that Thy hand has made" is still a rarity among us. His impression is that our prayers do not cover the total area swept by the grace of God when taken in its entirety. We say

that we accept the doctrine of common grace; not infrequently our prayers belie what we say. This is serious; for areas unreached by our prayers are at the same time areas untouched by our love. But unless men have experienced our promiscuous and prevenient benignity it is quite unlikely that we will be instrumental in bringing them to the point where they begin to qualify for the special fondness that springs up between believer and believer. This we will have to learn. If we do not learn it, when converts to the Christian Reformed fellowship will be few and far between. And that thought brings us back to the patient at whose sick-bed we are all the while standing.

ANY "MISSIONARY" activity that takes place without the exercise of prevenient love deteriorates at once into mere *proselyting*.

It is highly significant that neither the word nor the practice of proselyting survived Pentecost. The Holy Spirit saw fit to scuttle the term, and to invent a substitute for the word and for the technique.

Proselyting had sprung up, in the inter-testamentary period, among a people enthusiastically committed to the idea of a particular grace but totally blind and oblivious to the idea of a grace that is common. It is known to all that the Jews wasted no affection on the gentiles; what is not so commonly sensed is that this was so because of theological considerations. The Jews were unable to love gentiles *qua* gentiles because they were committed to the theology that God stops loving just as soon as the borders of the chosen people are reached. It was because Jonah was committed to a theology more narrow than was God's theology that he disobeyed orders to go to Nineveh.

However, the Jews did invade gentile territory; they did go on a sort of kidnapping venture. If they saw a gentile prick up his ears at what he heard of the Jews' religion then, and not until then, did a sense of confraternity spring up in the heart of the proselyter. And when the object of his "missionary" effort had given sufficient evidence of a state of grace, then he was adroitly herded in the direction of Jerusalem, where, if things went right, he was presently made over into a Jew.

The Jew felt that he was bound by his theology to withhold his love from the non-Jew until the latter had begun to cease being a gentile. The Jew could not love the gentile in his gentile setting — because he was committed to the mistaken theology that God withholds His love there. If God is to love a gentile, so thought the Jew, the gentile must first be *fetch*ed, fetched into the stockade where the love of God is at home. This explains the frantic haste with which the proselyter tries to get his convert into the stockade — he must be brought

into that enclosure where the love of God is in place and proper.

The New Testament Church did not go ahead full speed until proselyting had been replaced by missioning. The substitution of the latter for the former was dictated on the top of a house where a would-be missionary sat yawning. The man had been reared on a strict diet of special, that is, discriminating grace. So indoctrinated was he with the idea of a grace that stops at the border that he talked back impudently to the Teacher who was just then trying to make a missionary out of him. The *fetcher* in Peter had to be made over into a *bringer*. He turned out to be hard to change; for long afterward he was still sensitive to the accusation when his "orthodox" colleagues twitted him for having become a goer-to, for having "gone in unto gentiles" that is.

Such a poor learner was Peter that, as it seems, the Holy Spirit finally despaired of making a missionary out of him. He began to curry for the job one Saul of Tarsus, of whom He made the greatest goer-to of all times. But this selfsame Paul all but lost his life to a crowd of "orthodox" ones. They threw off their coats and hurled handfuls of dust into the air at the sight of the man who had "gone to the gentiles." It collected in black and dirty rings around their frothing mouths as they cried for the blood of the wretch who had the audacity to say that God had told him, "Depart, for I will send you far hence unto the gentiles!"

OTHER DUTIES are calling the consulting physician. In fact, he has gone already. But he has scribbled something on a note which he has left behind, a sort of prescription. It reads as follows: "Let the patient stop paying mere lip-service to the doctrine of common grace, that is, to a grace that is both prevenient and promiscuous. Then a love for men in their unsaved condition will become possible for him. Let him begin to love all, love them fervently, love them anteriorly and as they are, so that if and when they embrace the Gospel they will experience a subsequent and higher form of love at the hand of their benefactors — just as they at that point experience a subsequent and higher love at the hand of God. This should make the patient's pallor depart, color will return to his cheeks, and a sense of joyous well-being will course through his frame as he leaps to the task that awaits him."

The doctor has written, for the benefit of his colleagues I suppose, that he was led to this diagnosis and to this prescription by observing that the jaundice of the patient is most pronounced in his extremities, those areas where common grace, if mentioned at all, is referred to as though it were a rueful thing.

IT IS HOPED that the patient will have the visiting doctor's prescription filled. It is to be hoped that he gulps his bitter draught as instructed.

If he, and the doctors that come to his bedside, consider the diagnosis of the consulting physician erratic and the medication bizarre, then let them remember the case of Naaman the leper. To wash

in the Jordan seven times seemed to make no sense. What, with Pharpar and Abana to bathe in! But Naaman tried it. And it worked his cure. We read: "And his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, he was clean."

That the patient be cured is what matters, that and that only.

THE GRAHAM CRUSADES — SHALL WE PARTICIPATE?

by Sidney Rooy

THE BIG QUESTION facing every church in the area to which the Billy Graham Evangelistic Team comes is, "Shall we be a participating church or not?" It was this question that recently faced the Christian Reformed churches in the Eastern area. The question occasioned much discussion and debate, much soul-searching and prayer. How that question affected me, how it was answered by one of our Eastern churches and by its pastor, I should like to share with you.

The story begins some two years ago. A group of Christian laymen and ministers had invited the Crusade team to metropolitan New York. Mass media took up the Graham Crusade plans and began to follow their progress. The team refused to come, however, except by invitation of the Protestant Council of Churches in New York City. This it subsequently received.

Some Basic Problems

It was then that a perplexing question faced us: Could we in good conscience cooperate in this spiritual undertaking when Graham was being invited by liberal as well as conservative churches? We thought: "What fellowship hath light with darkness? Will his message be flavored to fit the liberal taste? And since all churches are permitted and encouraged to be participating churches, will not the Crusade policy of directing converts to their former church home spoil some of God's little flowers?"

As we studied and discussed and prayed, the following considerations gave us guidance:

(1) Graham does distinguish clearly between orthodoxy and liberalism as to his message. Graham teaches that the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God, that God is triune, that Jesus is the incarnate Son of God, that Calvary was God's atonement for man's sin, that the only way of

salvation for man is faith in the resurrected and returning Christ, that those who believe will be saved and those who believe not will be condemned. This is the message that, as he had publicly and openly announced, would guide the New York Crusade. This is the message he had consistently proclaimed in past Crusades. This is the message he was proclaiming weekly on the "Hour of Decision." This is the message proclaimed in his widely circulated books. We had no reason to doubt that this would be the message he would proclaim in New York City. This message left no doubt that Graham is orthodox and that the message he presents is in direct contrast to liberalism.

(2) Graham's insistence that all or most churches, without distinction between liberalism and orthodoxy, invite him to come for an area Crusade does not necessarily mean compromise. It may be a matter of dispute whether this is proper procedure. But does not common courtesy demand that Graham, since through mass media he touches the parish and the life of every church, should press for a rather general invitation to that particular area? If it is true for an individual in a particular limited area, for example, Paul on Mars Hill, or you and I on the steps of St. Peter's, is it not also true for a Crusade in a particular area? Acceptance of such an invitation need not compromise one's convictions. If a minister accepts an invitation to preach from Fosdick's former pulpit at Riverside Church, so long as he is free to preach the crucified Christ as taught by the Scriptures, he may open himself to criticism, but his acceptance would be no compromise. If it would give him an opportunity to preach the gospel, he should feel free to seek an invitation to preach in that church. Yet that would not justify his insisting on preaching there without invitation. Therefore it is not necessarily compromise for

Graham to seek an invitation from all, or most, area churches.

(3) The initial direction of "converts" (Graham prefers to call them "inquirers") into their former church home is the only feasible procedure in this type of evangelism. This again is open to differing judgments. But this must be carefully considered. In an area where the nature and spiritual condition of the churches is highly complex, it is well-nigh impossible to judge the spiritual caliber of each individual church. Especially is this true if the membership within a particular church bears a mixed character. This, it seems, is quite a general occurrence in the American church world.

Now the significant question is, Who is qualified to judge when the convert comes forward whether his former church is acceptable? Is the Crusade team? As relative strangers to the area, certainly not. Is the counselor? In view of the hundreds of churches in metropolitan areas, it would be exceedingly difficult. Is the convert? It would be premature at this moment to say he were. How then shall we establish what the convert's attitude to his former church shall be? This is again an exceedingly difficult question. Each answer we give may tend to oversimplification.

Would it not, however, be proper for the counselor to say to the convert: "Tonight you have come to faith in the living Christ. You need to know more about Him. Therefore study the Word of God diligently — every day. Be much in prayer and in communion with Him. He has promised His Spirit to lead you. And go to church to worship with others too. Look for your Christ there and for instruction in His Word as it is proclaimed with the message of life. Oh, yes, you'll be getting counseling letters from the Crusade office for some time to come. And, of course, I'll be in contact with you. I've promised as a counselor to do so within 24 or 48 hours if possible, and I'm encouraged to keep up my guiding contacts until you are well established in your faith and life."

Is it expecting too much of a new convert under such conditions to think that he will begin to ask questions if he does not find the Scripture's message in his church? Will not the personal study of the Scripture, the experience of personal communion with the Lord in prayer, and the continued guidance of the Crusade and the counselor, prompt such questions if the church is unfaithful to the truth? And when such questions arise, to whom will the convert turn except to those through whose guidance he found his Lord?

All of the foregoing considerations guided us in trying to discover whether working together with differing theological groups was warranted and possible. However, lest we would fall under the

judgment of Billy Sunday, who upon being criticized for his type of evangelism responded, "I like my way of doing it better than your way of not doing it," we also had to ask what we would fail to do by non-participation.

First, we would forfeit the opportunity to bear witness to the converts (some 56,000 of them, as it turned out to be, 44 percent of whom were unchurched), and therefore would abandon the field to orthodox and liberals who had no difficulty in co-operation. This was to us a most serious consideration. Here men, women, and young people; Negroes, whites, and Puerto Ricans; Catholics, Protestants, and Jews — all would come by the hundreds each night. We were invited to send consecrated and able men and women to explain to them the Gospel, to show them the way of salvation. The question then became for us, "Can we refuse such a plea for help?"

Second, we would be refusing to assist new converts who might be referred to our churches for follow-up counseling and guidance. It is clear that the Crusade could not refer unchurched converts to non-participating churches, since there would be no assurance of spiritual supervision and care. Again we would be closing the door to an appeal for help for babes in Christ.

Third, we had to face the fact that surely not in our generation, and perhaps not for generations to come, would we be able to present the Lord Jesus Christ to most of the millions of the unsaved in our metropolitan area. Here was an opportunity to present His claims to throngs of the unsaved in the person of a consecrated servant of the Lord. In the light of our own inability to meet the need alone, in the light of the Graham team's inability to meet the need alone, must we not work together to present the gospel to at least some of that throng?

In the light of the above, it seemed extremely difficult to say "No." The heart of the churches' participation in the Crusade, it seemed to us at that time, was: Shall we provide counselors to lead inquirers to the faith and to give them guidance in their Christian life? This appeared much more crucial than providing ushers and choir members, organizing new prayer groups, and scheduling buses.

But this brought us back to our main problem: Is it morally and spiritually defensible to refer inquirers and new converts to their former churches? In the light of the full picture we felt that it was, providing one condition were fulfilled. Babes in Christ must be made aware of perversions of the Gospel, and of those who divest Scriptural truths of their historic meaning. We realized it would be impossible to permit counselors to criticize other churches and denominations. This would bring

havoc and chaos into the whole program as each group attempted to out-proselytize the other.

In order to solve our problem, we asked the following question of the Crusade office:

Is the counselor in agreement with the policy and spirit of the Crusade if he should indicate to the convert the difference between orthodoxy and liberalism; or if he should make the convert aware of perversions of the Gospel, such as the attempt to explain away the divinity of Christ and the atoning character of the cross, without naming or alluding to any particular church or denomination?

The answer, given by one of the staff members in a telephone conversation, was to this effect: Yes, he certainly would be. The policy of the Crusade is not one which is ecumenical per se. We are not striving for a unity of the churches in the name of religion. We seek to promote Christ and Him crucified in every possible way. We emphasize the character of the present world, and the necessity of holding to certain essential doctrines. Faith in Christ is carefully defined. The counselors are urged to warn the counselee of the dangers he will face in expressing this new-found faith with its emphasis on the divinity of Christ and the Atonement, and how he may be ridiculed by some so-called religious leaders for holding to these truths. Sometimes, we have discovered, it takes as long as two or three months before the counselor's faithful warning bears fruit. But the Spirit uses the faithful warning to bring individuals to a dissatisfaction with the paltry messages they receive. However, the Crusade has a strict rule that no proselytizing be done. No churches may be mentioned by name, or denominations criticized, nor may the counselor use the opportunity to advance the cause of his own particular church.

In view of the above answer, which not only gave the counselor full freedom in emphasizing the basic truths of the Gospel, but encouraged him to set such truths over against modern perversions of it, we felt that in this important area we should participate in the Crusade.

What Manner of Involvement?

At this point we were ready to investigate what the involvement on the part of our church would be, should we participate in the Crusade. The following items taken from a communication from Billy Graham give a concise summary statement of five suggested ways in which cooperating churches could participate in the Crusade beginning May 15, 1957, in Madison Square Garden, New York City:

First, I would suggest that you start preaching evangelistic sermons around April 1st that would continue through May and June. This would give your people a clear idea of the evangelistic responsibility and mission of the church.

Secondly, call to the attention of your people continually in your bulletin and in public announcement the need of prayer.

Thirdly, plan an intensive program of evangelism by organizing delegations to the crusade meetings. Churches in other cities have received scores of new additions and, in some cases, doubled in membership by this method. The newspapers, radio and television will have aroused the curiosity of everyone in the vicinity of your church. Capitalize on that while inviting them to the crusade meetings and organizing delegations.

Fourthly, urgent! — send your list of selected personnel from your church for our various committees *immediately!* We will be using thousands of people from the churches in our choir, as ushers and counselors and on various committees. This will give the people of your church an unparalleled training that they could not otherwise get. This is the very heart of your participation and cooperation in these meetings.

Fifthly, plan to attend our eight workshops on evangelism during May, June, and September, for ministers in your area. Some of the world's great churchmen will be leading these discussions on various aspects of parish evangelism. These seminars and discussions will prove to be invaluable in suggesting techniques of church and lay evangelism.

Concerning these, let me make a few observations. *First*, as it turned out, the coming of the Crusade affected the preaching of the ministers who had direct contact with the Crusade, and it certainly had some effect upon that of many others. I realize this is a sort of inversion of Graham's first suggestion, yet strangely enough it worked out that way. The silent spectacle of hundreds of people dedicating and rededicating their lives in the cathedral-like hush that had settled upon the Garden was a testimony to the many of us who were preaching from week to week. Many a hortative "Let us" was unconsciously changed to the directness of "Are you?" Perhaps the consciousness that the Lord had called one or two of the people in front of us to a personal commitment to Himself through Billy Graham, and that there were others who needed to taste that same joy so badly, did it. Certainly the knowledge that God's Spirit still adds daily to the church such as are saved inspired our preaching to more fervor and directness than we had used before.

Second, most of our churches and members did pray for the Graham Crusade. It was heartwarming to know that the Lutherans and the Baptists, the Methodists and the Presbyterians were praying together with us. The emphasis upon prayer was strong, so much so that some objected. One can, however, register no objection to an emphasis on prayer, so long as the individuals and churches are free to express their prayer life in the way most meaningful to them. The organization of

home prayer meetings and the like, though encouraged, was left to the discretion of the local church.

Third, regarding delegations organized and sent to the Crusade by the churches it must be said that these proved to be in many instances one of the greatest dangers of the entire Crusade. Bible-carrying, hymn-singing Crusade-goers did not necessarily either promote their own spirituality or fulfill the real purpose of the Crusade. One of the prominent church weeklies in the American world ridiculed the Crusade on this point.

In cooperating with a Graham Crusade, therefore, a church should make certain that its organized delegations serve the real purpose of the Crusade. A Crusade is primarily intended for unchurched people, for uncommitted souls. Church members must be made to feel that they have betrayed the purpose of the Crusade if they attend many times without taking the unchurched neighbor or friend with them. Churches may desire to send buses, but then let the rule be established that permission to ride depends upon bringing someone unchurched. Here is the real test whether people are looking for personal excitement or supporting the intent of the Crusade.

Would it not be better, the question may be asked, to invite the unchurched into our own churches, rather than take them to a Crusade? Of course it would. Many of our neighbors are still waiting for such an invitation. The fact of the matter is, however, that people will politely excuse themselves from attendance at the church and yet eagerly grasp the opportunity to attend a Graham Crusade meeting. During the New York Crusade a local laundry man chartered a bus for his employees. Did they go? White and colored, unbelievers and Roman Catholic, they all went. And yet this laundry man, a conscientious mission worker, had pressed the invitation again and again to worship at our church, without success, upon the hearts of some of those who went to the Crusade willingly.

Fourth, the personnel most vital to and effective in the New York Crusade were the counselors. The counselors were the men and women who met the inquirers as they came to the front, each choosing someone of his own sex and color and approximately his own age. They stood together for a few moments below the pulpit as Graham prayed for them. Then they went downstairs. Here Graham spoke a few minutes, then each counselor and counselee talked and prayed together.

Choir members sang and received a blessing, no doubt. Ushers led people to their seats, and that was necessary. But counselors opened the Scriptures and pointed seeking souls to God. This was, as Graham said, the very heart of the Crusade.

To qualify as a counselor was not easy. Required were: a pastor's recommendation, attendance of

one night's instruction per week for nine consecutive weeks (only one absence countenanced), filling a counselor application blank, and a personal interview with a staff member. The instruction was primarily Scriptural in character, and memorization of key passages was required. The application form expected, among other things, a sound testimony of one's own faith and how one knows that he is a Christian, a statement of previous experience in evangelism and extent of training, and a statement of what a person must do to become a Christian. The interview revealed one's ability to communicate in a personal way. It does not seem possible that anyone who did not know his own relationship to Christ could qualify.

Fifth, perhaps the workshops on evangelism were the most directly valuable parts of the Crusade for ministers. To these all ministers were invited, to hear men of the caliber of the Rev. Tom Allen, head of the "Tell Scotland" movement, and the Rev. John Stott, pastor of All Souls Church in London. Here the sharing of ideas with pastors of other churches was stimulating, and the learning of new methods of evangelism from those whose lives have been spent in this work was valuable. Here a sound Scriptural emphasis was apparent as nowhere else in the entire Crusade.

What Have Been the Results?

Along the general lines suggested above, churches, some 1500 strong, joined in the execution of the Crusade. Some months have now passed. And the all-important question comes, Has it been worth while? Have the long-term results been good, or bad?

The answer is, They have been partly good and partly bad. Possibly much of what we call bad has been the result of bringing to light what was already weakness. Perhaps the bad effects can best be summed up by the word *superficial*, and that especially in two respects. First, there are those people whose commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ now seems to have been superficial. Their zeal has been short-lived. Perhaps at first they attended church irregularly and continued to do so. Perhaps they attended Sunday school before the Crusade and afterward still did not attend worship services. Perhaps they were really only children, and their childish enthusiasm has waned. Perhaps only curiosity brought them to the front, and profession of commitment became their excuse for being there. Whatever the practice or reason may have been, the superficial character of their "conversion" has become evident.

Second, there are those members of every church who have been adversely affected by the Crusade, or at least so it seems. Some of these people thought Graham sermons were good ordinary diet for the church, which Graham himself disavows.

Some were zealous "missionaries" when Graham was in town but now have settled back into that old, but comfortable, niche of inactivity. Others have become more critical than helpful in the mission program of their church.

Now the question at this point is whether the Crusade is responsible for this superficiality. That it became the occasioning factor, no one would deny. It seems more realistic, however, to assume that there was something wrong before the Crusade began which it brought to light and accentuated.

In regard to the temporary conversions, it must be remarked that a wholly unwarranted and unwholesome division between evangelism and doctrinal preaching has often been made in the churches. Responsibility for this rests with technical sermonizing and indiscriminate pew-sitting alike. In regard to the second kind of superficiality which the Crusade has brought to light — temporary mission zeal and the spirit of criticism on the part of church members — it should be said that these shortcomings are more the reflections of basic character defects than the results of a relatively brief series of evangelistic meetings.

But there have been many long-term effects of the Crusade as well. First, new converts have been added to the churches. This was the first intent of the Crusade and this has been accomplished. It is true that many of our churches have not shared in this harvest, but this has been due more to half-hearted or non-participation than anything else. A lady who came to faith on June 5 in the Garden last year recently made public profession of faith in one of our churches. A former Roman Catholic was led to a full commitment to the Lord through a lady connected with the Crusade, and he is now a very active member of one of our churches.

Second, trained and experienced counselors are now providing assistance in the work of personal calling in the community and are continuing worthwhile Crusade contacts by letter. The value of the experience gained in learning to lead a seeking soul to the Lord cannot be overestimated. Most of us are able to teach, or to talk in general about our faith, but we are dumb when it comes to getting on our knees with an inquirer and persuading him

to accept the Lord. Nor can the value of continuing Crusade contacts be questioned. One of our counselors wrote for many months to eight of the "spiritual children" directed to him, and he still continues correspondence with some.

Third, some churches which had been dying through disinterest or through perversion of the truth have secured a new lease on spiritual life. The result of new babes asking for the milk of the Word from those who had been content to feed husks has been wholesomely disquieting, and those who serve difficult mixed pastorates are gaining support from new believers.

Fourth, the preaching of evangelical ministers has taken on more personal and Scriptural directness. We are tempted to exhort our people to the gates of glory, and this may be well. The lack of emphasis, however, on the Scriptural teaching of conversion is only one indication of our preoccupation with the sheep within the fold and our lack of contact with the lost sheep of our community. When we stand face to face with these lost sheep, our preaching takes on more of the freshness, liveliness, and relevance of the Gospel.

Fifth, a new awareness of the universal character of the Lord's Church has been made real to all of us. It is impossible to attend meetings and work shoulder to shoulder with consecrated Christians of other denominations and not become increasingly aware that much is to be gained through closer contact with each other. There are many who seek what the Lord has entrusted to us, and there is much we can learn and have learned from others. Our reluctance in seeking closer contact has shut us off from some of the treasures God has for us.

In a real sense only eternity will reveal the full effect of the Crusade. When Christ left this earthly life, the world had been little touched, or so it appeared. The Romans, Greeks, and even Jews must have thought another religious idealist was defeated. But He left a few disciples behind through whom the world was greatly affected. The greatest asset the Crusade has left behind are the thousands of newly dedicated and redirected lives. What effect these will have in years to come only God can tell.

The next issue of the *Journal* will combine
the months of July and August

BERKOUWER *on the Image of God**

by Anthony A. Hoekema

The Biblical Description of the Image

Berkouwer begins the third chapter of his book by admitting that the Scriptures nowhere give us a systematic doctrine of what the image of God includes. In Genesis 1:26, 27 we are specifically told that God created man in His image, but we are not told in what this image or likeness consisted. Calvin, however, led the way in calling attention to two ways in which the New Testament sheds light on the image of God: (1) by what it says about the restoration of the image in the regenerate, and (2) by what it says about Christ, who is in a unique way the image of God. Following Calvin's lead, therefore, Berkouwer proceeds to discuss the "new man" as pictured in the New Testament, in contrast with the "old man." In the life of this *new man* who has put off the old man, who has learned to know Christ, who has been taught in Him, the image of God becomes visible. In this tremendous change which Christ brings about, man arrives at his true humanity (*waarachtig mens-zijn*). When we think of the image of God, therefore, we ought to think not just about an analogy of being, an analogy to God reflected in the ego or the personality or in self-consciousness, but about the fulness of this new life which can perhaps best be described as a new relationship to God.

This new man is recognizable in the new direction of his life. This new life is a new birth, a living in love, a walking in the truth, a passing out of death into life. This new life is a new inner disposition of heart which, however, reveals itself in a new outward walk. In this new life man, like the prodigal son, truly comes to himself. Therefore in this new life, described variously as newness, fellowship, peace or joy, man is re-created after the image of God. (pp. 101-103).

In this connection Berkouwer discusses the dynamics of the imitation of God. He cites such passages as Ephesians 5:1, 2: "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you. . . ." The image of God is therefore not just a static entity; it is a dynamic challenge to consecrated living! The Christian must constantly strive in God's strength *to be like God* in his daily life. He must forgive as His Heavenly Father forgives; he must love as God loves; he must strive to be perfect as His Father in heaven is perfect. This imitation of God

is to assume the form of an imitation of Christ. Since Christ in His incarnation stooped to become like us, we must now strive to be like Him, particularly by walking in love. Since Christ is the "image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15), He must again be "formed in us" (Gal. 4:19). (pp. 105-117).

This imitation of God, however, must never be thought of apart from our fellowship with others. We must never think about the renewal of the image of God in an individualistic way, but always in connection with our relatedness to others. John's epistles particularly stress this: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (I John 4:11); "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen" (I John 4:20). Paul stresses the same thought: "Owe no man anything, save to love one another" (Rom. 13:8). (pp. 121f.).

It is in this *analogy of love*, not in the scholastic *analogy of being*, that Berkouwer sees the image of God in man.

The Corruption of the Image

While rejecting the double aspect of the image of God, Berkouwer fully recognizes that man after the fall has still remained man. What others would call the broader aspect of the image which has been retained by fallen man, Berkouwer would simply call man's continuing humanity. He says in the opening lines of Chapter 4, however, that what Scripture emphasizes is not just this continuing humanity as such but what man has done with and in his humanity: in other words, his apostasy from God despite his continuing humanity. The emphasis of Scripture is not on the fact that man has retained his reason, but on the way in which man in his fallen state perverts and abuses his reason. Therefore, he says, we must next face the question of the nature of the corruption of the image of God by sin.

In this connection Berkouwer discusses certain creedal passages which seem to give the impression that the corruption of the image of God in fallen man is not quite total. Article 14 of the Belgic Confession says that fallen man "lost all his excellent gifts which he had received from God, and retained only small remains thereof." At first reading it might appear that the corruption of the image, as here pictured, is not quite total, since man still has small remains of his original gifts. But, Berkouwer points out, the rest of the sentence

*This is the second and final part of Dr. Hoekema's review of *De Mens het Beeld Gods* by G. C. Berkouwer. An English Translation by Dirk W. Jellema will be published by Wm. B. Eerdmans. The first part appeared in the May 1958 issue.

makes quite plain that these "small remains" do not constitute a limitation upon the corruption of the image, for even these remains "are sufficient to leave man without excuse; for all the light which is in us is changed into darkness." Next a citation is made of a sentence from the Canons of Dort, III-IV, Article 4: "There remain, however, in man since the fall, the glimmerings of natural light, whereby he retains some knowledge of God, of natural things, and of the difference between good and evil, and shows some regard for virtue and for good outward behavior." Here again one seems to detect an area in man where the corruption of sin has not entered. Not so, continues Berkouwer, for the next two sentences of the Canons set us straight: "But so far is this light of nature from being sufficient to bring him to a saving knowledge of God and to true conversion that he is incapable of using it aright even in things natural and civil. Nay further, this light, such as it is, man in various ways renders wholly polluted, and hinders in unrighteousness, by doing which he becomes inexcusable before God." The "small remains" and "glimmerings of natural light" mentioned by our Confessions, therefore, do not indicate "parts" of man that are not corrupt, but simply point to the fact that, despite the fall, man has remained man. (pp. 131-133).

Berkouwer then quotes a number of Scripture passages, taken from the Old Testament, from the words of Christ, and from the epistles, to demonstrate the radical corruption of man by sin. Since these passages are familiar, I shall not reproduce them. The author's point here is that the corruption of the image by sin is total. Any attempt to tone down the totality of this corruption will result in toning down the radical, miraculous character of our salvation. Man who is dead in sin must by a miracle be made alive by God. (pp. 148-153).

The Restraint of This Corruption

Having established the total corruption of the image, Dr. Berkouwer next turns his attention to the problem of how we are to reconcile this total corruption with the various forms of goodness which we find among unregenerate men and with the various gradations in evil which we encounter. This problem has been answered, he indicates in Chapter 5, by means of the doctrine of common grace. Calvin was one of the first to enunciate this doctrine. His teachings on common grace, however, were not a denial of total depravity, but rather presupposed total depravity. They constituted Calvin's answer to the question of how there can still be so much virtue in the world despite the fact of total depravity. It is because of common grace that the light of truth is so admirably displayed in many heathen writers that we cannot read their writings without great admiration

(*Institutes*, II, 2, 15). Yet these natural gifts do not negate the corruption of fallen man. This corruption becomes especially evident in the blindness and stupidity of fallen man in matters spiritual. (Berkouwer, pp. 158-162.) So much for Calvin.

After tracing similar ideas in the writings of Abraham Kuyper, Berkouwer summarizes by commenting that we do not see in actual life an antithesis between fullgrown badness and complete holiness, but that even in the lives of unbelievers deeds occur which show an undeniable similarity to the good works of believers. This is to be explained by the presence of common grace which though it is not saving grace, and though it does not renew man after the image of the Creator (*italics mine*), does nevertheless restrain sin. This restraint can lead to a relative conformity to God's will, which is not without significance in the light of God's purposes, but which does not in the least excuse man for his total apostasy from God. (p. 166).

After a discerning interlude, in which he sets forth the Rev. Herman Hoeksema's denial of common grace and exposes the inadequacy of the latter's explanation of the phenomena of civil and natural morality (pp. 167-170), Berkouwer goes on to discuss the precise way in which this restraint of sin in the unregenerate takes place. He comes to the conclusion that one cannot simply say, as the medieval scholastics affirmed, that this restraint takes place through man's reason and will, since both reason and will have been corrupted by sin. Neither will it suffice to point to man's conscience, since conscience too is caught up in the depravity which has polluted human nature. Berkouwer prefers to ascribe this restraint of sin in the unregenerate to what he calls *mede-menselijkheid*, an untranslatable term which he defines as follows: the various types of relationships that exist between man and his fellowmen. (p. 194).

Berkouwer insists that we must never think about man individualistically, but that we must always see man both in his dependence upon God, and in his involvement with others. At this point he advances another objection to the scholastic idea that reason and will restrain sin: the view of human nature implied in that description is too individualistic. God by His common grace preserves mankind from complete demonization by means of *mede-menselijkheid*. Man never exists in isolation, but always in relatedness to others, and through this relatedness to others his sin is restrained. Yet this *mede-menselijkheid* does not imply a diminution of total corruption, for man's corruption also manifests itself in his relations with others — most decisively so, in fact. Man stands guilty before God even while he enjoys the blessings of *mede-menselijkheid*. (pp. 194-206).

The Whole Man

For those who have some psychological orientation, the sixth chapter of this book should prove especially helpful. For in this chapter, entitled "The Whole Man," Dr. Berkouwer sets forth the indissoluble unity of man. He first again affirms man's fundamental relatedness to God, asserting that man apart from this relatedness is an unreal phantom, a creature of abstract thought. Man simply cannot be understood apart from his being bound to God above him, and to his fellowmen beside him. In fact, he does not exist apart from his double relatedness. Berkouwer next observes that the Bible is not primarily concerned about any one part of man, but about the whole man in his total relatedness to God. He discusses such concepts as *soul* and *heart*, indicating that these Biblical terms cannot be precisely translated into present-day psychological terminology, but that they stand for the whole man in his concentrated oneness.¹ He repudiates any distinction between "lower" and "higher" aspects of man, such as was commonly made in scholastic thought, asserting that the disparagement of the body which usually underlay that distinction had its roots in Greek thought rather than in the Scriptures. (pp. 221f.). He takes up the terms *flesh* and *spirit* as they occur in the New Testament, and denies that they lead us to a dualistic anthropology. (pp. 223-226). He then discusses the terms *soul* and *body* in their various ramifications (e.g., dichotomy versus trichotomy), but concludes that, though the Scriptures do speak of soul and body in man, we ought not to think of these as two utterly and completely diverse substances, as medieval scholasticism tended to do, and as Descartes tended to do, but as two aspects of man's indissoluble unity which always function together — at least in man as we now know him. (pp. 227-245). (Berkouwer discusses the question of man's existence during the intermediate state between death and resurrection in Chapter 7; he there asserts, however, that the Bible simply does not tell us in anthropological terms what it is in man which persists after death, pp. 294f). Summarizing this point, we may say that Berkouwer accepts the customary body-soul distinction but agrees with the Vollenhoven-Dooyeweerd school in rejecting a Cartesian dualism of two diverse substances in man.

It will be of interest to note that Berkouwer is very much afraid of the common tendency to look for something in man which can be called the *core* of his existence, out of which man develops himself. He alludes to certain Roman Catholic writers (e. g., Marlet, P. Schoonenberg) who have

tried to find this central core of man in what they call *the person*. While appreciating the emphasis of this personalism on man's responsibility, over against the "mass-mind" depersonalization so common in contemporary life, he warns that even this personalism may lead to a new kind of dualism between the individual person and objective reality. In theology this "personalism," for example, may lead to a minimizing of doctrinal truths for the sake of a "personal encounter" with God. Berkouwer also objects to speaking of the soul as an anthropologically "higher" aspect of man in distinction from the body. He points out that God does not merely seek the soul of man; he seeks man himself, in his totality. (pp. 245-253).

Berkouwer closes this chapter by reminding his readers that the Scriptures take the body seriously. We can never eliminate the body from the image of God, for the Scriptures do not say that God made the soul in His image, but that He made man — the whole man, body and soul — in His image. When He was on earth Jesus Christ concerned Himself with man's body as well as man's soul. The Biblical doctrine of the resurrection of the body underscores the body's worth. (pp. 254-257). So, when we think of man, we must always think of him in the totality of his existence: in his relatedness to God and others, in the concentrated unity of all his functions, and in his physico-spiritual nature.

Appraisal

Since Berkouwer's book is primarily a theological study, it ought to be theologically appraised. What follows does not purport to be the type of thorough-going evaluation which a volume of this magnitude deserves. I shall only attempt to indicate some emphases and viewpoints which seem to me to be both psychologically and theologically relevant.

It strikes me that Dr. Berkouwer has made at least the following five significant contributions toward our understanding of man:

(1) *He vigorously emphasizes the unity of man.* This is a most wholesome emphasis over against the faculty psychology which has so often plagued Reformed theology, and which has appeared frequently in various forms of the "primacy of the intellect" concept. Berkouwer has taken into account the growing body of recent literature on Biblical anthropology. Hence his view of the interrelatedness of man's functions and of the organic union between soul and body is more satisfactory from the psychological point of view than some anthropologies formulated by Reformed theologians in the past.

(2) *Berkouwer has an eye for the importance of motivation in human behavior.* It goes without saying that scholastic anthropology, indebted as it

1. Pp. 218-221. In connection with the concept *heart* and also in his discussion of the body-soul problem Berkouwer in this chapter evinces great appreciation for the contributions made by the school of Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd.

was to Greek thought, attached altogether too much weight to the role of reason in human behavior. The system of Thomas Aquinas, for instance, is intellectualistic through and through; in it man is viewed more as a thinking machine than as a creature of surging drives. Berkouwer, however, sees the inadequacy of this scholastic approach to man, and views man, not just as a being gifted with reason, but as a creature of surging drives and dynamic motives. One has the feeling that Berkouwer has not been unaware of the significance of the psychoanalytic movement in psychology. His anthropology does much more justice to the complex and dynamic character of human behavior than many previous theological treatments of man have done.

(3) *Berkouwer insists that we cannot really understand man apart from his relatedness to God and to his fellowmen.* This is, of course, not a new idea; Augustine and Calvin both asserted that we cannot know man unless we know God, and vice versa. Yet it is good for us to be reminded of this point. Many of the sciences must perforce abstract man from a living context of relationships in order to study him; but we may never forget that man does not exist apart from these relationships. As Berkouwer himself puts it, "He who views man or himself apart from the light of divine revelation shall always fail to see that which is most characteristic of man." (p. 18).

(4) *Berkouwer has a balanced view, I believe, of both the depravity of man and the restraint of sin.* So often we tend to go either to the one extreme or to the other. Either we emphasize man's total corruption so exclusively that we have no eye for the good which there still is in unregenerate man,² or we lay so much stress on common grace that we tend to tone down man's depravity. Berkouwer emphasizes both sides of this complex problem. There is a restraint of sin, but this restraint does not diminish man's total depravity. I believe that his contention that God restrains sin in the unregenerate through *mede-menselijkheid* is particularly helpful.

(5) *Berkouwer has a dynamic view of the image of God in man.* He does not view the image of God as consisting merely of certain structural qualities with which God has endowed man. The image of God, for him, is something dynamic: the newness

of life to which we are restored through Christ. What makes this concept particularly dynamic is his insistence that this renewal into the image of God is not simply a bestowal from God but also a task for the believer. He binds upon our hearts the words of Paul in Ephesians 5: "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you." The image of God does not mean simply the possession of reason, will, or freedom. It means the new life in Christ, which is begun in regeneration and strengthened in sanctification. And yet we who have been regenerated are not simply to sit back and wait for God to renew His image more completely in us; we have a responsibility in this matter. We must strive by God's grace and in His strength daily to become more like God. We cannot imitate God in His omniscience, omnipotence or omnipresence, but we are to imitate Him in His love, a love which was most vividly revealed in Christ. And so we must strive to love the Father as Christ loved Him, and to love others as Christ loved us. In the love which fills our lives others ought to be able to see something of a resemblance to our Father who is in Heaven, and to the Christ who most perfectly revealed Him. When I have an opportunity to help my fellowman, I must strive to love him as much as Christ loved me, and to spend myself for him as sacrificially as my Lord spent Himself for me. And so the image of God, in Berkouwer's treatment, is not just a static entity; it is an ever-beckoning ideal, a challenge to consecrated living, a summons to love as God loves.

The image of God, however, also has eschatological dimensions. Never shall we in this life wholly realize all that is involved in this spiritual renewal, for our renewal here below will always be imperfect, fragmentary, and incomplete. Only in the life to come shall we fully understand the image of God in man. "Beloved, now are we children of God and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is" (I John 3:2).³

3. This brief appraisal has only mentioned favorable points. The reader is reminded, however, of the footnote appended to the end of the first installment of this article which indicated that Berkouwer's rejection of the wider narrower distinction could well be questioned. While appreciative of Berkouwer's many fine insights, the author of this review seriously doubts whether one can do justice to the doctrine of the image of God without invoking the customary distinction between the wider and the narrower sense.

2. Only a relative kind of good; not spiritual good.

JOHANNES GEZON

by Jacob G. Vanden Bosch

To err is human. How well aware a writer is of the truth of this saying. Though he may do all he can to avoid errors, mistakes in spelling are bound somehow to creep into his printed contributions and cause him either to hang his head in shame or to be disgusted with some on whom he considers responsible. Usually it is good policy not to call attention to these errors or to correct them, but in the life sketch of John Gelock an error crept in that must be corrected. On page 18, the first column, line 13 from below, the writer is made to say that a day of prayer was to be held for the purpose of "exercising" an evil spirit. Astounding assertion! There is a big difference between "exercising" and "exorcising," "driving out," an evil spirit. Of course, the latter was meant.

After this rather irrelevant introduction we pass on to sketch the life of Johannes Gezon, another layman prominent in the early annals of the Christian Reformed Church. Gezon was born October 1, 1814, at Hellevoetsluis, The Netherlands, a city that in these days derived some of its importance from its being the seat of a fortress built to protect the national dockyard at that place. As the name suggests, there was in him on his father's side a strain of French blood. His father was a painter in a shipyard. Not willing to adopt the vocation of his father, young Gezon chose to be a seaman on inland waters. His career was interrupted by his being conscripted into military service, in which he saw fit to spend six years. Generally service in the army is considered to be a waste of precious years, but it did a good deal for Gezon. It insured for him good schooling, and, his aptitude and behavior being good, he was made a sergeant and appointed quartermaster, an officer whose duty it is to assign lodging and to provide clothing and other necessities. He also took part in an expedition to Guinea, West Africa, where the Dutch owned possessions at that time. Visits to the old home at Hellevoetsluis may have made him acquainted with Rev. G. J. Raidt, who later became a Presbyterian minister at Cincinnati.

Spiritually, however, his military experience did him no good. Already at the age of eighteen, he knew himself as one for whom the Savior died, but he had not publicly owned Him as Savior and Lord, and his six years in the army with its many temptations kept him from openly confessing the Christ. Not until he was twenty-eight years old, after he had been honorably dismissed from the

army, did he take courage to do so. Upon dismissal from military service, he resumed his chosen vocation. He married Hilletje Van Gelderen and settled in The Hague as a potato merchant, his competent wife conducting the store while he made business trips with his barge.

Establishing their home in a strange place did not cause the young couple to neglect the nurture of their religious life. They listened to the preaching of men having the reputation of being conservative, but were not satisfied until they heard Rev. H. Joffers. Closer acquaintance with him led to their joining the church of which he was pastor. Rev. Joffers was a prominent clergyman among the Secessionists and was one of the leaders of the rigid right wing of the movement. He became pastor of the church at The Hague in 1849. Gezon did not think of his church membership as a kind of sinecure, but was so active and so faithful that his fellow members, recognizing his staunchness and ability, soon made him an elder. His reputation as an efficient elder led to his being chosen by Classis as a delegate to the Synod held at Zwolle in 1854. This Synod was one of great importance for the churches of the Secession, for it took measures whereby factional disturbances were ended and the unity and peace of the churches were enhanced, one of the chief measures being the organization of the Theological School at Kampen. At the meetings of this body Gezon met Rev. D. J. Vander Werp, its clerk, and Rev. W. H. Van Leeuwen, both of whom he would later meet in America, the latter as pastor of the Spring Street Church. It was by participation in events fraught with great importance for the church that Gezon was trained to be an able and useful servant of his Lord.

THAT SAME YEAR, 1854, Gezon decided to leave The Netherlands for America. It was not the immediate material needs of his family that made him come to this decision, for he was fairly prosperous, but the promise of a brighter future for his children. So he and his family embarked on the sailing vessel *Edward Everett*, which brought them to the New World. Their first destination was Albany, but after a residence of only eight months in that city Gezon pushed his course farther west and arrived at Grand Rapids, May 1, 1855, where he with his family settled permanently.

Heeding the urgent invitation of John Gelock and Gysbert Haan, Gezon and family joined the

Second Reformed Church, but not without misgivings. There was friction among the Secessionists in Holland between a party of whom Rev. H. Joffers was a leader and a party led by Rev. A. Brummelkamp and others, the former being more rigid in their interpretation of some aspects of Reformed truth and church polity than the latter. Since Dr. Van Raalte, a brother-in-law of Rev. Brummelkamp, strongly favored the union of the colonists with the Reformed Church of America, the reason for Gezon's misgivings can readily be surmised. Accordingly, when the separation came early in 1857, Gezon, as well as Gelock and Haan, was ready to leave the Reformed Church and to return to the original ecclesiastical status of the colonists. Rev. Joffers had, in some degree, prepared him for taking this step. In the newly organized church Gelock, Gezon, and Haan were elected elders, Gezon's election lacking only three votes from being unanimous. This confidence in Gezon was shared by all the churches of the separation gathered through their elders representing them in their general meetings or assemblies, for they made him their clerk. In fact, one of the minutes refers to Gezon as the regular clerk, so that he may be regarded as the first stated clerk of the denomination. All the minutes from 1857 to 1860 were written and signed by him. Thus within the brief space of two years Gezon had made two major choices, the consequences of which would show themselves in numberless minor choices in the subsequent life of himself and family. These were the coming to America and the founding of a new church group.

BUT SOON A PERIOD of inscrutable gloom overshadowed the life of Gezon. Already in 1860, only three years after the founding of the new church, Gezon resigned as elder because of grievous circumstances. What was the nature of these grievous circumstances the minutes of the consistory do not explain, but we do know that they plunged him into a dire spiritual struggle and enveloped him in an overwhelming spiritual darkness. In time, however, the sun broke through the clouds of gloom to bring light and peace with the result that in 1865 the consistory asked him to be the teacher in the Christian school existing under the auspices of the congregation, and he complied with the request. To the work of teaching Gezon was no stranger, for he had taught before and had given eminent satisfaction, and at the consistory's request he also was the catechist of the congregation. The years he devoted to teaching in the parochial school give him an honored name in the history of the Christian school movement. In 1869 a daughter was married to candidate Jacob Noordewier, and during the pastorate of Rev. G. E. Boer of the Spring Street

Church, from 1873 to 1876, Gezon was again nominated for the eldership, and was elected.

The mission of John Gelock, Jacobus De Jong and Barend De Graaf in 1872 to the churches in The Netherlands did not produce the results ardently hoped for. The young struggling group in America realized with keen disappointment the meaning of its failure to gain the recognition from the Dutch churches of the justice of its course. But it did not cease its efforts to gain what it so earnestly desired. In 1875, at the Synod held at 's-Hertogenbosch another attempt was made to secure approval of the return of the churches here to their original independent status. Accordingly Elder Johannes Gezon, when he contemplated visit to the old fatherland, was selected to represent our churches and to plead our cause. In doing this Elder Gezon had to be a match for men like Rev. R. Pieters of Holland, Michigan, and Elder H. Yntema, who were delegates of the aggrieved church in America. He gave a good account of himself and worthily served the best interests of his constituency. The address he delivered at that Synod reveals Gezon to have been a speaker of no mean ability. It must have been a marked experience for Gezon for the second time to be seated as a delegate at the Synod of the churches in The Netherlands, though in an entirely different capacity. Upon his return he gave a public report of his trip and of his mission in both Holland and Grand Rapids and proved himself to be a doughty defender.

The services which Elder Gezon rendered the Spring Street, now First, Church were valuable and were appreciated. If there were no clergyman in the pulpit to conduct the services, Elder Gezon generally read a sermon. Frequently, too, consistory assigned to him various catechism classes and thus honored him as a good pedagogue. He was so good a teacher that those who were instructed by him remembered him gratefully. What qualified him to be an efficient elder was not only his natural ability, but also his mastery of Reformed truth gained by a wide reading of standard authors.

SUNDRY DETAILS in this brief life sketch of our subject must be added to make the figure of the man more nearly complete. Like a good Calvinist Gezon did not shun participation in the civic activities of his community. For the space of six years he served his city as poor master. Together with his youngest son he for a while ran a grocery store on upper Monroe. In 1881 death removed his wife from his side, and in 1886 he himself departed to be with Christ. To Mr. and Mrs. Gezon were born six children, three sons and three daughters. One of the sons, Hermandus, was a soldier in the Civil War and took part in General Sherman's devastating march from Atlanta to the

ea. Two of their daughters were married to ministers of the gospel, one to Prof. G. K. Hemkes, and the other to Rev. J. Noordewier, and the third daughter was married to a son of Rev. W. H. Van Leeuwen. To them the promise of Psalm 45:16 that "instead of the fathers shall be thy children" was graciously remembered. The Gezon name is kept fragrant among us, for most of the descend-

ants are respectable citizens of Grand Rapids and vicinity and several of the grandsons have honorably served the churches to which they belong as elders and deacons. As we study the careers of men like Gelock and Gezon, we are prompted to echo the sentiment of Moses, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them."

BOOK REVIEWS

THE GREAT DIVIDE

The Christ of Faith, by Karl Adam. 364 pp. New York: Pantheon, 1957.
The Roots of the Reformation, by Karl Adam. 95 pp. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1951.

Reviewed by LEWIS B. SMEDES,
 Assistant Professor of Bible, Calvin College.

If I were a Roman Catholic and were asked to recommend books on Catholic theology to educated Protestants, I would put the books of Karl Adam close to first on my list. I would choose Adam because he is profoundly one with his Church and yet unlikely to offend Protestant sensibilities with Roman extremes. I would select him because he is sober, dispassionate, and yet able to write dogmatic theology with a brilliance and a fervent devotion that would make most Protestants wish he were a Protestant theologian. I would put his books high on the list because a Protestant can read and understand him more easily than he can understand a good many modern Protestant writers. Finally, Adam would be my choice, if I were a Catholic, because he puts the issue where the conservative Protestant can see it clearly. As a Protestant, I find Adam instructive but tragic reading because here, in the finest of Roman theology, I discover again the awful reality of Christendom's Great Divide.

Karl Adam is a dogmatic theologian. He is not a crusader, not a propagandist, not an artist. His career has been that of a professor of dogmatic theology, most of it spent at the University of Tuebingen in Germany. His book, *Das Wesen des Katholizismus*, is the finest straight-forward explanation of the Catholic Church and faith that I know. It has become something of a

classic in its line, having been translated into eleven languages. Its English translation, *The Spirit of Catholicism*, has had eleven hard-cover and at least six paper-back printings. If a Protestant cares to see the Roman Church through the eyes and heart of a learned Catholic scholar, he would do well to buy and read this book. It will serve him better in understanding the Roman Church than will a year's subscription to *The Converted Catholic* magazine.

The two books we have before us now are of a different type than *The Spirit of Catholicism*. Neither are expositions of the Catholic Church as such. The first, *The Christ of Faith*, is a dogmatic — historical treatment of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. The second, *The Roots of the Reformation*, is Adam's go at defining the central issue that separates Protestants from the Catholic Church. *The Christ of Faith* is a big book of over 360 pages, containing the substance of lectures that Adam gave at the university over several decades. The latter, only 95 pages in paper-back, is a partial reprint of the important book published some years ago under the title, *Una Sancta* — in English translation as, *The One and the Holy*. These two books, different in aim, content, and scope, taken together point up the tragic dilemma that the conservative Protestant encounters when he tries to begin silent

conversation with Roman theology.

The Christ of Faith is a book about Jesus Christ that a Reformed person can understand and appreciate. Readers of the *Journal* capable of handling this kind of book would feel at home in most of it. The Reformed man will be more at ease in this book than he is when reading a good deal of recent Protestant Christology. The categories are familiar. The terms are unambiguous. The reader is in contact with historic definitions and is left in no doubt as to how the writer really understands them. The chapters covering the Biblical image of Christ are excellent. In style it is the kind of book that Herman Bavinck, though not G. C. Berkouwer, would write. One recognizes that in the main lines, Adam's Christ of Faith is the Christ of Bavinck and Berkouwer and us.

Even in points where we may have looked for specific Catholic tendencies, we find Adam playing them down. There is, for instance, the matter of circumincession — a Catholic term that refers to an interpenetration between the two natures of Christ, a working of something of the divine nature into the human nature. Some Catholics talk about the deification of the human nature of Christ. Even Thomas Aquinas said that the human mind of Christ enjoyed a certain omniscience as a result of its union with the divine nature. But Jesus said that even the Son of man was ignorant of at least one thing — the day and the hour of the judgment. Who, asks Adam, was right? Jesus or the theologians? Adam, cautiously to be sure, takes Jesus at His word.

Adam also takes a more traditional slant than do some of his Catholic contemporaries on the manner of the incarnation and its importance for salvation. It is not strange today to find Catholic writers underscoring the incarnation as the chief factor in our redemption. For this reason, the man-

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ner of the incarnation is highly important. Put simply, how did it happen? Was the humanity of Jesus elevated to union with Godhead or did Godhead come down to humanity? (See the Athanasian Creed, which says that the incarnation took place not by God changing into man, but by humanity being elevated into Godhead.) Many Catholic theologians say it was by elevation of humanity. The implication that follows is this: As the human nature of Christ was supernaturalized by its elevation into personal union with the Son of God, it passes on this supernaturalizing effect to the believer through the sacraments. But Adam sees it differently. "What is it precisely," he asks, "that redeems us in the figure of Christ — that his humanity is assumed into the Godhead, or that the Godhead became wholly and completely man? . . . The answer

is given unambiguously in the revealed word of the Bible. . . . The decisive thing is not the *ascendere*, the ascent of the human into the divine, but the *descendere*, the descent of the divine to mankind. The tremendous miracle is not to be found in the divinization of the flesh, but in the incarnation of God" (p. 298). What, then, is the relationship between the cross and the crib, between the death and the incarnation? Is it that the cross was but a necessary fulfillment of the incarnation? Or was the incarnation a required premise for the crucial event of the cross? Adam is clear. "The incarnation of the Son of God created the premises and foundations for that mighty, earth-shaking event when the Son of God died on Golgotha for our salvation. It is this death for our salvation that gives the incarnation its ultimate, terrible solemnity, and its special importance: the Son of God was born for us, that he might die for us" (p. 302).

This will strike many as traditional, historic, orthodox Christology. When Adam criticizes what he calls "non-Catholic Christology," he criticizes the same kinds of Christology that Berkouwer criticizes in his own work on the subject. There are indeed points where we would want to pause and question, but the general impression of Adam's *Christ of Faith* is that his Christ looks in most respects for all the world like our Christ. Yet, at the beginning of this book Adam says that Christology lies at the heart of all Catholic dogma. "Catholic dogma," he writes, "is centered on Christ." So, too, Bavinck: "The teaching concerning Jesus Christ . . . is the center of all dogmatics" (*Ger. Dog.*, III, 291). If Adam is speaking for Rome as Bavinck does for Reformed theology, does this mean that Rome and Protestantism are divided somewhere other than at the center? Are they agreed at the center and divided only at the periphery?

One is tempted to say that it is not the doctrine of Christ as such that divides us; the division is created by Rome's unbiblical doctrine of how Christ's salvation is obtained by us. This is true. But since we are discussing Adam's books we shall have to put that otherwise major point aside. Adam says what is equally true, and more pointed: what divides us is the

question of authority. In the opening chapter of *The Christ of Faith* Adam asks, "What is the source of our faith in Christ?" He answers with the Roman answer: the living Church. Not the book, but the institution! The Bible is a book, open to attack by critics whose attacks on the letter leave Protestants uncertain; the Church's word transcends attack, gives unshakable certitude. But the "living Church" is only that Church whose every priest can trace his ordination back in physical lineage to the apostles and whose Father and Shepherd at Rome is the very Rock on which Christ builds His Church. This is what Adam sees as the central question. He points it up in the book to which we now turn, *The Roots of the Reformation*.

Adam wants to keep us from going back to Luther's day and trying to begin the discussion at that point. He spends his first chapter exposing the sins of the Roman clergy during the decadent sixteenth century. He is a condemning of them as is any Protestant historian. ("Both clergy and people must cry *mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*, my sins, my most grievous sins.") But things are different now. The Church has long since purged itself of the abuses that occasioned Luther's reform. If Luther were living today he would hardly recognize Rome as the same Church he tasted before and found so sour. Not only that, but many of the objections Luther had to Rome's teachings were the result of misunderstanding. If Luther had only known the *real* Catholic faith, he would have stayed to become a reformer for whom the Roman Church would be ever grateful. As it is, most of Luther's theological objections could today find a possible solution. But the central issue can find no solution short of capitulation on one side or the other today: the question of papal authority. Was the papacy "founded by the will of Christ, or . . . is it Antichrist who has achieved an historical embodiment in it?" (p. 76). For our purpose, we may leave aside the question of whether other matters could conceivably find a solution short of major capitulation on one side or the other. The fact is that to this Roman theologian the question of authority is the decisive one. It is for us too.

Adam makes it clear that, with this as the point of division, he can only talk with believing Protestants. With liberals and free-thinkers there is no common ground. "Union is only possible, then, where faith in the living God and His incarnate Son still binds and strengthens consciences" (p. 16). Then, with what seems to be a genuine opening for fruitful discussion, Adam adds: "For believing Christians, this question can only be solved in the light of Revelation, only, that is, by listening in reverent fear to the Word of God, and to His Word alone, not to personal preferences and feelings" (*ibid.*). This would seem to indicate that the Catholic is willing to listen as well as to pontificate on the subject of papal authority.

But actually it is at this very point that discussion is closed. Even if Adam were right about the possibility of some kind of agreement or toleration on other questions, there is no possibility here of discussion, let alone agreement. We are at dead-end. Though Adam seems to throw the door open to discussion by his appeal to Revelation as the only standard, he is actually shutting it in our faces. For to him, Revelation is equated with the Church and the Church is equated with the authority of the Pope. For example, the crucial text concerning papal authority is Matthew 16:18, 19 — the Rock passage. Can we discuss the meaning of this passage with Adam? Not really. For it is not the passage as such that provides the basis for papal authority. It is the passage as interpreted by papal authority that provides the very basis for papal authority. The text itself, even granting that our Lord was speaking to Peter as a person and not to his confession, affords no firm basis for the papacy as we know it. Even Adam gives the text only a nod and then goes on to argue for the papacy on the grounds of its necessity. He sees the divided Church, he sees Protestantism with its countless sects, and concludes that the only hope for unity is the papacy. "It is the inner necessity of the Church, the constant threat and peril to her unity from human subjectivism, that necessitates this interpretation [of Matthew 16:18, 19]. For the sake of the unity of the Church the Rock of Peter's office must remain

through the centuries, so that the gates of Hell may not prevail" (p. 81). The Church, then, defines the Word by what it feels to be a necessity. What Rome considers safe, assuring, necessary becomes the norm. And while necessity may be the mother of the Church's interpretation of the Word, it is the interpretation that constitutes the Revelation.

This is the silencer. The question of papal authority is settled by what the papacy considers necessary for its own maintenance. Even Matthew 16:18, 19 is beyond discussion. How can we discuss the right or wrong of papal authority when papal authority is assumed from the beginning as the authority for settling the question? The discussion must go like this. Roman: "Papal authority is established by Revelation." Protestant: "Can this be shown from Revelation?" Roman: "Yes, for the papacy maintains that it is so." Protestant: "But what about establishing papal authority by Revelation?" Roman: "The papacy is the final authority on Revelation, and therefore on papal authority." Finis! In spite of sincere good will on the part of Roman Catholics like Karl Adam, the dead-end position of Rome rules out any possibility of discussion. The impasse is reached at the beginning — the question of authority.

The Roman theologian cannot really entertain *discussion* on the subject of the re-union of the Churches. All he can do is open the door to repentant wanderers. "Because of the way in which the message of Christ is thus united with her own tradition, the Catholic Church feels and knows herself as the Church of Christ in the emphatic, exclusive sense. . . . Because she is aware of this she is bound to condemn all other churches which have arisen or may arise . . . as extra-Christian and indeed . . . anti-Christian creations. . . . For her there is only one true union, reunion with herself" (p. 94).

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ly on the central doctrine: the Christ of faith. Churches who disagree on the central doctrine — Jesus Christ — find it possible to cooperate in an evangelistic crusade because they find some kind of nebulous agreement on the question of authority. Those Churches most solidly behind such crusades are just those with affinity for Catholic Adam's *Christ of Faith*. Yet, in spite of this, who could conceive of a Roman-Fundamentalist joint crusade for Christ? The division is frozen behind

the walls of authority: "the Bible says" vs. "the Church teaches." In this deadlock, discussion for Catholics becomes an appeal for our repentance and return to Rome. For us Protestants it is a signal to leave the discussion table and go to the prayer-room to offer prayers for the conversion of the Pope. There we stand. There is a Christ on each side of the wall; both parties claim Him. Do we still dare to pray that God may break down the wall?

CHRISTIAN MAN AND SOCIETY

Responsible Protestantism. Essays on the Christian's Role in a Secular Society, by Cecil De Boer. Compiled and edited by Henry Zylstra. 247 pp. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957. \$3.50.

Reviewed by JOHN C. RENSENBRINK,
Assistant Professor of Political Science, Williams College.

Responsible Protestantism is the work of a reflective man, his wisdom tempered and enlightened by a personal excitement with Christian faith. The twenty essays it contains are vigorously and fairly argued, and carry a message which is at once as sharply relevant to the thinker or man of theory as it is to the man of practice. In the crucial respect, life is whole: thinking and acting must both be invigorated by a righteous will. This is the ageless and universal message of Christianity — of any Christianity worth living. It is set down here by a professor of philosophy, lamentably no longer with us, in confident, serious prose. "One cannot do much good in the world," he writes in several places, "by talking or speculating about the meaning of life; to do any good one must somehow possess that meaning." Modern man finds this difficult, but finds much harder still the proposition that "the meaning of life is something *given* to men only in the course of active obedience to life's fundamental demands."

This book is the testament of a resolute mind willing and able to assess the relevance of old-fashioned Augustinian Christianity to a world in essential disorder, willing and able as well to give an uncompromising judgment of the character of our modern

American civilization, and then to deliver his estimate of the contemporary place and duty of the Christian. The pages are crowded with valuable and sometimes brilliant insights on major issues ranging from the modern debate between science and religion to the problems of international peace and war. The book may be said to fall into two parts: the first seven essays are theoretical in nature, while the last twelve seek practical articulations. Forming a kind of natural bridge between the two parts is chapter eight, which is a brief, provocative discussion on the sickness of modern man (a creature "literally possessed by a mood born of the meaninglessness of life" who has "almost completely lost faith in the possibility of a reasonable world, a world of peace and order"). This continuity and progress of subject matter — and the clarity the whole book gains because of it — is an example of the habitual excellence with which the editor and compiler of these essays did his work: the late Henry Zylstra.

Professor De Boer's comparison of the Russian and American ways of life is not flattering to Americans. It is not exactly the kind of analysis which would make it popular with the editors and publishers, the critics and atten-

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tive public of this country. It would not, for example, recommend itself for entry into the slick pages of *Time* magazine, nor the self-styled sophisticated columns of the *Saturday Review*. Even the soberly earnest *New York Times* would have trouble digesting and rendering palatable to its readers the undiluted, uncompromising (and uncompromisingly religious) character of De Boer's observations. We are a nation of practical atheists and practical materialists, he says, painting a portrait of ourselves with too much candor and careful probing for very widespread consumption. He finds our pretension to idealism particularly ironic, if not disgusting. "The tragedy of practical materialism," he states, "is that it just about invariably goes together with complacency, self-righteousness, and low moral standards." And in a passage I think particularly just he observes that the only real difference between the Russian state and ourselves is "that whereas Russia has inherited tyranny and terrorism of the Czar we have inherited the liberalism and republicanism of Protestant Christianity. Of course, no one denies that this is a significant difference, but the fact is that it is not a difference which we have made or earned." We are living off the moral, religious, and political capital of the past and have neither the sense to admit it nor the grace and wisdom to seek renewal.

De Boer's point of departure for an understanding and judgment of political life is the degree to which it does or does not sustain and act as a means to the extension of the kingdom of God. However, in seeking to make practical application of this principle to modern life, the Christian faces a grave obstacle. He is confronted by

secular indifference of modern life the kingdom of God, the unwillingness of moderns either to believe in, or comprehend, or have respect for its claims. Given this, the duty of the Christian for the present is to see to it that political life does not become an active hindrance to the life of the kingdom. This means that Christians must try "to function as the conscience of our nation." They must protest, be honest in word and deed, and actively maintain the ideal of purity in faith and morals. They must not become entangled with the vested interests of modern capitalism," or of any historically conditioned social theory or system. They must do this with the help in view of slowly building up Christian scruples within the consciences of men."

There is no more impressive or necessary task than this in a world of guided missiles; in a world where men grow smaller and organizations bigger; in a world where system and psychology take the place of Providence and love; where government is seemingly more benevolent as it grows more pervasively despotic; and where old faiths in liberal values and humanitarian sentiments are sickly hangovers from a once optimistic age.

There is, I believe, space for an aside. It is suggested by what I found in De Boer's approach to political things. It is an undercurrent only, and thus not dominant in his thinking, but it is there, and in varying degree is, I suppose, characteristic of all of us who follow the Augustinian tradition. For we begin with the radical breach between the city of man and the city of God, the love of self to the contempt of God over against the love of God to the contempt of self. There is therefore always the tendency to depreciate, disparage politics and the political claims as such. The inclination is wrong to consider it the realm of evil, the realm of power and worldly ambition as opposed to the realm of love and constructive endeavor; or, on a more popular level, to argue that "people" are better than "politics," that politicians are necessarily nasty, corrupt, etc.

Much of this is healthy skepticism, but too much is a very bad thing. It clouds political judgment — something which no Christian, no matter how steadfast his gaze on the ulti-

mate realities, can do entirely without. It causes Christian citizens to apply an unrealistic, even unnatural, standard to actual political conditions. It makes them foolish idealists today ("Ah! we have found a good — i.e., morally earnest — man; he will 'solve' our problems!") and the blackest pessimists tomorrow ("Our good man has been duped, swindled, or corrupted by the swinish herd in Washington: they're all the same!"). It causes otherwise sensible men — prudent and even wisely statesmanlike in their personal dealings in the family, community or calling — to have no respect for, or grasp of, these same qualities in the political realm. Consequently, they cannot really set (until afterwards when it is too late) the difference between a statesman adroitly capable of handling the realities of power and of using power for limited ends, and the genuinely well-meaning man who promises a crusade for total peace and happiness. They consistently confuse the one with an opportunist and the other with a Christian: which is another way of saying they are atrocious judges of the political art.

Politics, I would add, is vice on a grander scale than can be found in any private realm: it is the place to which the pettiness, selfishness, cupidity and stupidity of all the people severally find their natural point of gravitation and popular outlet. It may be true that people are better than politics (sometimes) but this says nothing about the inherent badness of the political endeavor. It simply means that

in this realm the difficulties — and the stakes — are much greater, virtue has a much harder time being heard and felt. Hardy and brave must be the man who enters in at the gates — and given the moral level to which contemporary life and politics has fallen, the appearance in political life of a man who is God-fearing, a statesman, and successful is fantastically problematic.

A comment on style. Though the thought conveyed by the author is forthright, the flow of the words is frequently marred by such phrases as "it would seem," or "from the point of view of the Christian, (or the Calvinist)." I make mention of it only because I see and hear these and similar phrases used excessively in modern speech and writing, Christian and secular. They add nothing to what one is saying and in fact dissipate the force and clarity of the argument. They look strange in the context of De Boer's thought, and this fact is an added evidence of the forces and conviction of the man's mind.

To sum up — this is a book which any discriminating reader will want as a permanent addition to his library. There is stimulating matter here: not the arid meanderings of "objective" philosophy, nor the futile bleatings of specialists who aspire to knowledge of "what is needed"; nor yet the "practical" prescriptions of the complacently common man. The book stalls are full of their writings, the reviews are full of their praise: as a result the wiser course for these times is to read less, not more.

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Here is a boon, however, that ought to be read. For instead of offering pabulum it stresses — with a full understanding of what is at stake — that “no human power, whether of science, or of philosophy, or of moral earnestness can compel the ‘sorrow that leadeth to repentance.’” It is a book which insists that repentance is in the end the fundamental demand of life — that if

anyone is to function as the conscience of a nation, “he must first have grappled with the deeply personal problems of a man’s relation to God.”

De Boer is no stranger to the problem of ultimate meaninglessness. But — he had an answer. It is worth reading the book if only to discover how well — to put it as he would have put it — that answer possessed him.

DEWEY AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

John Dewey’s Thought and Its Implications for Christian Education, by Manford George Gutzke. New York: King’s Crown Press, Columbia University, 1956, 270 pages.

Reviewed by DONALD OPPEWAL,
Graduate Student in Education, University of Illinois.

Some such book as this was bound to appear sooner or later. Sooner or later someone who was intimately acquainted with both Christian thought and the thought of John Dewey was bound to wonder if the former could benefit from the insights of the latter.

This book was originally a doctoral thesis written for the department of Philosophical Foundations in Teacher’s College at Columbia University. The author was at the time a member of the faculty at Columbia Theological Seminary, and some idea of his general theological outlook can be inferred from his acknowledgment of support in this project from the Shenandoah Presbyterian Church of Miami, Florida, and from the Monday Night Bible Class of North Avenue Presbyterian Church of Atlanta, Georgia.

It should be quickly pointed out that the term “Education” in the title refers not to any envisaged day-school program, or for that matter to any Sunday-school program. It rather deals with the more abstract and general problem of what the author calls the “Possibility and consequence of utilizing the operation of intelligence in the deliberate propagation of the Christian message and the culture of Christian religious experience” (p. x). It is thus really an examination of how value judgments may be derived from religious experience, and by what means religious experience may be

encouraged and made to contribute to human development.

The study of religious experience set forth in this book has, according to the author, been developed from the point of view that no real conflict exists between “Western science” and the “Christian faith.” He readily admits that there have been quarrels between scientists and theologians, but contends that such conflict arose from misunderstanding from both sides.

The first thing he must do to support this point of view is to show that science as a method of dealing with reality is not to be limited to physical objects. He contends that modern science deals mainly with the relational aspect of any object, rather than with the object itself. It deals not so much with the nature of the thing as with how it is related to other things in the natural order. It is in the context of this sense of the scientific method that Gutzke contends that it can deal with any human experience. Since “natural science” is for this author to be understood as dealing with only the relational aspect of anything, the “nature” of soul, for example, would not involve any substantive idea of it. Science would concern itself only with its relation to anything else. Insofar then as the scientific method can deal with the casual relationships between religious experience and Christian values, and the relationship between certain methods of cultivating religious

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experience and the actual results those methods, this method is for author a perfectly legitimate one use.

The next problem which he faces the attempt to make religious experience subject to the scientific method getting rid of the usual distinction between the natural and the supernatural, with the supernatural being of beyond not only the reach of scientific method, but even beyond that of kind of analysis. If he cannot adequately account for what tradition called the supernatural, he sees that thesis is endangered. He thus suggests that

In the traditional usage of terms the supernatural was construed as the supra-mechanical, supra-physical, the supra-material when “nature” was confined to the traits of existence. But with the orientation of this term in Dewey’s view of the universe, “nature” included the “spiritual”, the “ideal”, the “invisible” characters once associated only with the “supernatural” (p. 26).

One might at this point question Gutzke’s assumption that all that tradition ever meant by the supernatural was the spiritual and the intangible. The supernatural usually referred to that which does not participate in the flux of things, that which is beyond nature. By this simple device of definition, Gutzke has brought the supernatural back within nature. Fortunately for Gutzke and the reader the total argument of the book does not rest on this semantic trick. For those who fear that this definition of supernatural will destroy the validity of a truth said to be derived supernatural, Gutzke hastens to add that Dewey does not judge the ultimate source of content of what is called supernatural truth. He is only contending that on

truth is achieved in and through religious experience, then it is within Dewey's meaning of nature, and is part of human experience, subject to the same analysis and interpretation as any other kind of human experience. According to Gutzke, Dewey makes no judgment about "perceived values," putting them all equal status as actual human experiences. Dewey, and therefore Gutzke, is concerned more with examining how these perceived values are productive of fruitful action, being impatient of those that are valued only in abstraction from actual results in conduct.

Gutzke seems to be saying that Dewey wanted an examination of religious experience not so that it could be shown to be false or fruitless, but that both the factors causing it and the results of it could be understood and utilized by intelligence for the multiplication and enhancement of further religious experience. Gutzke's desire to see these religious insights manipulated by intelligence (defined as the scientific method) and thus shared with others is evidenced in the following statement about religious experiences:

However, the having of such spontaneous consummatory experiences does not lead directly into the institution of procedures designed to produce, improve, and distribute such results. This history of mankind shows that men have enjoyed, appreciated, and cherished values without undertaking to achieve them by intelligent manipulation of casual conditions. Their occurrence has been left frequently to chance with a resultant occult character in their manifestation (p. 234).

The mystic revelation (i.e., fellowship with Christ) is apparently acceptable

Dewey and the author as long as causal factors are investigated and laid bare, and thus opportunity is given to share the values inherent in the experience. An almost religious fervor and enthusiasm for the use of the scientific method in the analysis and propagation of these values of religious experience is evident in the following summary statement by the author:

It has been the thesis of this discussion that when experimental analysis and interpretation are applied in the exposition of religious experience, there will be neither reduc-

tion nor impairment of the values cherished by man, but rather an enlargement and improvement of such values to the general advantage and benefit of all concerned (p. 228).

After this brief summary of the general argument of the book, it might be well to make a few observations about its relevance for the Christian. If its assumptions and standards are wholly different from those accepted by a Christian, then of course the entire argument is irrelevant. One assumption underlying the whole argument of the author is that the method of John Dewey, i.e., the method of experimental intelligence, is no more than a tool for interpreting experience. Since it presumably carries no metaphysical weight nor is guided by any prior epistemological commitment, it can be used in the analysis of religious experience as well as in the analysis of any other kind. In order to attack this assumption one would have to show, among other things, that the "soul" or "self" is more than the sum total of those causal factors and influences that have produced it. Dewey's method assumes that any given entity under examination is made up solely of relations, and since the experimental method is qualified to cope with relations between entities, it can tell us all we need to know about them. It would seem to this reviewer that to the extent that one could use this method of analyzing religious experience without committing oneself to the position that it tells us all there is to know about the soul, one would have a valuable tool. Purely as a tool, it would help in examining those factors that go into making religious experience, and help us to find ways of strengthening them for the purpose of enhancing religious experience.

Because Christians in the past have avoided making any serious attempts to analyze the religious experience by this method, the mystical experience of fellowship with Christ, or the religious experience expected in the partaking of Holy Communion, for example, remain largely unintelligible to others. Failure to examine and systematically lay bare what the causal factors in such an experience are, and failure to understand how it is either encouraged or discouraged has left us quite haphazard in our methodology of passing on to the next generation the faith that is in us. We have limited

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ourselves pretty largely to passing on the conceptual formulation, the end-products of that faith, thinking that these are adequate to produce religious experience in the younger generation. Our vexation with the younger generation when it fails to conform to the expectations of the older generation should be tempered with the awareness that when this failure is widespread, it indicates an inadequacy in the method by which that faith is passed on. When we look to our method and examine the factors which foster or frustrate religious experience, we will have begun the job which Gutzke sees needs doing.

Representing as he does a segment of Protestantism of a non-fundamentalistic variety, a segment that wishes to deal responsibly with religious experience, Gutzke offers a challenge to our past thinking on this matter. To the extent that we have left almost totally unexamined the mechanism which connects belief and action, we need his warning that change in behavior requires more than intellectual belief that the Bible favors it. To the extent that we have often equated religious experience with belief that the Bible says thus and so, we need his reminder that Christian experience is infinitely more complex than a simple thought-action conditioned response, with the thought found in some specific chapter and verse in the Bible. To the extent that we have used the Bible as an end in itself, and not as a means to increasing fellowship with God, we need the warning that the fostering of further and deeper religious experience should be the aim of all methodology in Christian education (i.e., the program for enhancing the effect of religious experience on conduct and for the development of further religious experience).

This book is no how-to-do-it manual on the religious training of the young, complete with a blueprint for action.

It is rather a basic work in theory, one which recommends the application of a planned methodology where virtually none now exists. Although most of the book is devoted to purely theoretical discussion, the author does apply some of his principles to specific areas. Perhaps two illustrations will suffice to show what sort of things Gutzke has in mind.

Programs of worship, or orders of service, are held by Gutzke to be purely instrumental: they exist solely for the purpose of stimulating some kind of religious experience, whether that be fellowship of the saints, communion with God, penitence, or whatever. He would seem to be arguing that man can through reason and experience discover what words, art works, postures, songs, architecture, and so on can best encourage and enhance the desired experience. The discovery of the causal connections between certain procedures and certain results in religious experience can enable man to choose those which he regards as most worthwhile.

Another aspect of religion which comes in for some discussion is the role of creeds in religious experience. For Gutzke creeds came into being because they offered instruments for the achieving of some kind of religious experience. They continue to exist for this reason, and not because they have some ultimate value quite apart from their effect on human lives. Experimental intelligence is again the tool which Gutzke offers for the selection of those creedal formulations which have offered and continue to offer possibilities for growth in religious experience.

For those who can survive the initial shock of such a radical approach to the problem of a planned methodology for enhancing religious experience, this book should provide much stimulation. Those to whom religious experience is inevitably purely personal, with no consistent causal factors involved and with no consistent results achieved in action, will regard this suggestion of the author as sheer effrontery, and the attempt to lay bare the causal factors in religious experience as blasphemy.

Those who have always considered Dewey as ever the foe of all religion will be surprised at the wealth of

material which Gutzke finds in Dewey's works which has a bearing on religious experience. Only someone, certainly not this reviewer, who has read more of John Dewey than the author of this book could say whether or not Gutzke has adequately interpreted and applied Dewey's thought at all points. This review has been directed less to an analysis of this aspect of the book than to what Gutzke himself has to say, because here the book exhibits its

greatest significance for thinking Christians anywhere.

A final warning is in order. The author has drunk so long and so deeply at the Deweyan spring that he is absorbed not only a great deal of outlook but also his intricate and voluted style. He has adopted not only Dewey's categories, but his syntax and this in itself is at times a forbidding thing to the lover of clear prose.

John Calvin on John 21

21. *That all may be one.* The Evangelist lays down the end of our happiness as consisting in unity, and justly; for the ruin of the human race is, that, having been alienated from God, it is also broken and scattered in itself. The restoration of it, therefore on the contrary, consists in its being properly united in one body, as Paul declares the perfection of the Church to consist in *believers being joined together into one spirit*, and says that *apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors were given that they might edify and restore the body of Christ, till it came to the unity of faith*; and therefore he exhorts believers to grow into Christ, who is the Head, from whom the whole body joined together and connected by every bond of supply, according to the operation of the measure of every part, maketh increase of it to edification (Ephesians 4:3, 11-16). Wherefore, whenever Christ speaks about unity, let us remember how basely and shockingly, when separated from Him, the world is scattered; and, next, let us learn that the commencement of the blessed life is that we be all governed, and that we all live, by the Spirit of Christ alone.

Again, it ought to be understood that every instance in which Christ declares, in this chapter, that He is *one with the Father*, He does not speak simply of His divine essence, but that He is called *one* as regards His mediatorial office and in so far as He is our Head . . . Christ's desire was widely different from that of raising our minds to a mere speculation about His hidden divinity; for He reasons from the end by showing that we ought to be *one*, otherwise the unity which He has with the Father would be fruitless and unavailing. To comprehend aright what was intended by saying that Christ and the Father are *one*, we must take care not to deprive Christ of His office as Mediator, but must rather view Him as He is the Head of the Church, and unite Him with His members. Thus will the chain of thought be preserved, that in order to preserve the unity of the Son with the Father from being fruitless and unavailing, the power of that unity must be diffused through the whole body of believers.

—Commentary on the Gospel According to John.